

REMARKS

By the present amendment, claims 1 and 16 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 11 (protective film comprising at least two layers having different softening points), and claim 17 has been amended to be dependent on claim 1. Accordingly, claims 11 and 18 have been canceled, and claims 12-15 have been amended to be dependent on claim 1 instead of claim 11. These amendments correspond to the amendments in the unentered amendment filed on August 27, 2004.

Further, claims 3 and 4 have been amended to depend on claim 2 instead of claim 1, and new claims 19-32 have been added. Claim 19 corresponds to claim 4 but depends on claim 3, claims 20-22 correspond to claim 5 but depend on claims 2-4, respectively, and claims 23-26 correspond to claim 6 but depend on claims 2-5, respectively. New claims 27-32 depend on claims 1-6 respectively, and recite that the polarizer is a non-foamed film. Support for this recitation is found in the original application, and in particular, immediately derived from the paragraph bridging pages 6-7.

Claims 1-6, 10, 11-17, and 19-32 are pending in the present application. Independent claim 1, and claims 2-6, 10, 11-15, 17, and 19-32 dependent directly or indirectly thereon, are directed to a manufacturing method of a polarizing film. Independent claim 16 is also directed to a manufacturing method of a polarizing film.

In the Office Action dated July 6, 2004, claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 4,387,133 to Ichikawa et al. (Ichikawa). It is alleged in the Office Action that Ichikawa discloses the dyed hydrophilic polymer film with protective film applied by thermocompression bonding.

As indicated in the Amendment filed August 27, 2004, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the protective film comprises at least two layers having different softening points, as previously recited in claim 11. This feature is not taught or suggested in Ishikawa. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, in the Office Action dated July 6, 2004, claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 4,230,768 to Hamada et al. (Hamada). It is alleged in the Office Action that Hamada discloses a polarizer having 5 to 50 microns with protective film applied by thermocompression bonding.

As indicated in the Amendment filed August 27, 2004, claim 17 has been amended to be dependent on claim 1, which recites that the protective film comprises at least two layers having different softening points, as previously recited in claim 11. This feature is not taught or suggested in Hamada. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, in the Office Action dated August 27, 2004, claims 1-2 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ichikawa in view of either US 2,237,567 to Land (Land) or US 3,051,054 to Crandon (Crandon), claims 3-5 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ichikawa in view of either Land or Crandon, further in view of US 3,772,128 to Kahn et al. (Kahn), and claims 11-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ichikawa in view of either Land or Crandon, further in view of US 4,370,374 to Raabe et al. (Raabe).

It is alleged in the Office Action that Ichikawa discloses a dyed PVA polarizer to which a protective film is heat-laminated without adhesive, and that stretching a dyed PVA film to obtain a polarizer is conventional in the art as evidenced by Land and Crandon, and with respect to claims 11-15, it is also alleged in particular that Raabe suggests the use of a protective film formed of two

layers having different melting points.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested. As indicated in the Amendment filed on August 27, 2004, there would have been no motivation to use the protective film of Raabe on a polarizer comprising a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film, because Raabe does not provide any teaching or motivation to transfer its method to the field of optical field, and because the teaching of Raabe is limited to foamed films, so that there is no suggestion or motivation to adapt its method to stretched polymer films made of dyed hydrophilic polymer films.

Specifically, the motivation from Raabe to form “an excellent durable bond without blisters” as alleged in the Office Action (section 10 on page 9 of the Office Action) is limited to adding a protective skin on a foamed material. The full sentence of Raabe in the relevant passage reads:

In addition, they [the protective films] must be firmly joined to the surface of the foamed plastics bodies, not form blisters and retain a durable bond. (Raabe at col. 1, lines 26-28) (emphasis added)

Raabe also states generally that:

The present invention is based on the problem of providing a plastics film, with which foamed plastics bodies can be encapsulated without the application of adhesives such as contact or solution adhesives. (Raabe at col. 1, lines 44-47) (emphasis added)

In contrast, in the presently claimed invention, a protective film comprising at least two layers having different softening points is contacted onto at least one face of a polarizer comprising a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film, as recited in present claims 1 and 16. A foamed film is not made into a film having polarizing properties by dyeing stretching, and a hydrophilic polymer can not be formed into a foamed layer. Thus, this feature of

the presently claimed invention is not taught or suggested in Raabe, because the teaching in Raabe is limited to a field remote from optical films, and because the motivation in Raabe is to address problems in connection with “foamed plastics bodies”. In other words, Raabe does not provide any motivation to apply its protective film to a non-foamed film such as a polarizer comprising a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film.

More specifically, as indicated in the Amendments filed on October 4, 2004, the only use of a multilayer film in Raabe is found in Example 5, where a multilayer film is applied onto a foamed film using an iron for 10 seconds. A person of ordinary skill in the art would immediately recognize that heating with an iron for 10 seconds as taught in Raabe would be expected to result in a possible degradation of the optical characteristics of a non-foamed polarizer such as a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film. Thus, a person of ordinary skill in the art would be deterred from transferring the technique of Raabe to a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film. In particular, since Raabe is limited to foamed films, that person would find no guidance on (i) process modifications required to apply the multilayer film to a non-foamed film such as a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film, and (ii) chances that the multilayer film of Raabe may be successfully applied to such non-foamed film without detrimental effect on the optical properties. As a result, in the absence of a reasonable expectation of success, a person of ordinary skill in the art would have no motivation to refer to the teaching of Raabe or to attempt to adapt it to a non-foamed film such as a stretched polymer film made of dyed hydrophilic polymer film.

In addition, with respect to dependent claims 3, 5, 20-22, and the claims dependent thereon, as also indicated in the Amendment filed on October 4, 2004, it is submitted that Raabe

teaches applying an iron for 10 seconds, so that Raabe fails to teach or suggest a heating treatment period of time is not more than five seconds, as recited in present claim 3, and also fails to teach or suggest applying a linear loads pressure at not less than 5 N/cm, as recited in present claim 5. Such processing conditions are not taught or suggested in Raabe, which focuses on non-optical foamed material and provides thermocompression conditions which are not adapted to optical non-foamed films. Therefore, for these respective reasons alone, claims 3 and 5, and the claims dependent thereon, are not obvious over the cited references taken alone or in any combination.

Further, with respect to dependent claims 27-32, it is submitted that Raabe completely fails to teach or suggest appropriate thermocompression conditions for a non-foamed film. Therefore, for this reason alone, claims 27-32 are not obvious over the cited references taken alone or in any combination.

Further, with respect to the other dependent claims, the cited references fail to teach or suggest the combinations of features recited in these respective claims. Therefore, for these respective reasons alone, these dependent claims are not obvious over the cited references taken alone or in any combination.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejections should be withdrawn.

Next, in the Office Action dated July 6, 2004, claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ichikawa in view of Hamada. It is alleged in the Office Action that Hamada suggests the recited thickness for the polarizer of Ichikawa.

As indicated in the Amendment filed on August 27, 2004, since claim 17 is now dependent on claim 1, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection in view of the discussion above regarding the rejection of claim 1 over Ishikawa is respectfully requested, as Hamada fails to

remedy the deficiencies of Ishikawa as indicated above.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Next, in the Office Action dated July 6, 2004, claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over US 3,320,601 to Wong et al. (Wong) in view of Raabe, and claim 18 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ichikawa in view of Raabe.

As indicated in the Amendment filed on August 27, 2004, since claim 18 has been cancelled, it is submitted that the rejections are moot. Further, reference is made to the discussion above regarding the deficiencies of Raabe.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejections should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Serial Number: 10/056,752

Group Art Unit: 1733

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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